attend the first meeting of the India-Israel Joint Committee on Defence Cooperation, held during September 17-20, 2002. No purchase agreement was signed during the visit.

Increase of Sanitary Staff-Strength in Secunderabad Cantonment Board

2864. SHRI NANDI YELLAIAH: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the sanitary staff-strength of Secunderabad Cantonment Board has increased proportionately to meet the heavy demand of 500 civilian colonies;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) to (c) There has been no increase in the sanitary staff-strength of Secunderabad Cantonment Board. The additional work load of both sweeping and cleaning of garbage from 250 housing colonies are undertaken by engaging private contractors. The arrangement is working satisfactorily.

Joint Exercises with US and France

2865. SHRI PREM CHAND GUPTA: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that IAF has entered into an agreement with the US and France to conduct joint exercises in air and ground warfare;

(b) if so, whether this represents a major strategic shift in India's Defence policy; and

(c) if so, the details of this cooperation and their long and short-term objectives?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) As part of international defence cooperation, joint exercises are planned with French and US Air Force.